

The Mexican Indian

He Numbers Millions and
Forms the Great Prob-
lem of the Future Re-
public

MANY RACES AND 51

DIFFERENT LANGUAGES

The Aztecs in 1913—Among the
Zapotecas, From Whom Juarez Sprung—The Giddy Girls
Of Tehuantepec. Strange Indians
Of Northern Mexico
Who Lived In Caves. The
Origin Of The Apartment
House.

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MEXICO CITY.

The red man is a more serious problem in Mexico than the black man is in the United States. This country has over 15,000,000 people, and of these less than 5,000,000 are whites. There are about 6,000,000 pure Indians and 6,000,000 more who are red men, more or less crossed with the whites.

The pure Indians are practically uneducated, and this is largely so of the mixed breeds. The greater part of them were for years in little more than debt slavery, and today some millions of them are mere hewers of wood and drawers of water on the estates of the rich hacendados. Some work in the towns and others live in villages, maintaining many of the customs of centuries ago.

Within the past few years Mr. Frederick Starr has been making studies of the Mexican Indians. He has traveled from here across the country down to Guatemala City, visiting the various tribes and taking measurements of their heads, busts and of other parts of their figures. He has photographed thousands of them and has made plaster casts of many. A part of his travels was through the mountains of southern Mexico, where he found many Indian villages, each village being a little republic. He found many new tribes and a so many descendants of the ancient peoples who inhabited Mexico during the days of Montezuma. It is through his researches and those of other ethnologists that the authorities here are studying the great political problems which confront them.

Fifty-One Different Languages.

They now know that there are scores of different Indian tribes in Mexico and that each has its peculiarities. In 1864 one of the chief scientists of the republic, Don Manuel Orozco y Barra, found that there were fifty-one different Indian languages, and, in addition, about sixty-nine dialects. He divided these languages into eleven different families, and it was later shown that nearly all of these Indians had used ideographs and employed them in communicating thought.

One of the best known of the Indian races is the Aztecs. It was the ruling race at the time Cortez came and there are millions of it on the plateau today. The Aztecs civilization has been so pictured by Prescott that many think that it is about the only race of Indians in Mexico. The truth is that the Aztecs got the most of their civilization from the Toltecs, whom they conquered when they came here from the north. They got their religion from them, and also their calendar and architecture. The Toltecs built the Pyramids of Mexico, and either they or a branch of this race, known as the Mayans, constructed the wonderful cities of Yucatan and those of Guatemala as well. I have a ready written of the ruins of Quirigua in the Motagua valley, not far from the Caribbean sea in Guatemala, which our archeologists are now excavating. They are the remains of temples built by the Mayans, who are supposed to have gone there from Mexico centuries ago.

The Aztecs called themselves Mexicans and it is from them that we get the name Mexico. Their descendants are numerous today, but are largely peons who work for the whites. It is from them that the rank and file of the soldiers are recruited.

The Mixtecas and Zapotecas.

Among the other Indians who have to be reckoned with, in the Mexico to come, are the Zapotecas and the Mixtecas. Both of these races are noted for their intelligence, and they have already given Mexico some of its ablest men. Benito Juarez, for years the president of the republic, was a full-blooded Zapoteca, and President Porfirio Diaz had Mixteca blood in his veins. These tribes are now found on the southern slopes of the central plateaus. You may see them in Puebla, Oaxaca, Guerrero and Morelos. It is said that their ancestors date back to the time when Mitla, Xochicalco and Zaachila were built. The Zapotecas were never subdued

by the Aztecs, and their are now growing in independence right along. There are a great many of them in Oaxaca, a state whose population is fully nine-tenths Indian. Some are to be found on the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, where the women are noted for their picturesqueness and for their independent ways.

The Girls of Tehuantepec.

Indeed, the girls of Tehuantepec are among the beauties of the North American continent. They are as straight as a royal palm tree and their forms are beautifully rounded. They have olive skins, black hair and eyes and teeth as white as lime freshly slaked. Their ordinary costume is a jacket and skirt, the former having short sleeves and cut very low at the neck, so that it exposes their beautiful shoulders and arms. The jacket reaches almost to the waist and a strip of bare skin usually shows between it and the skirt.

The skirt makes one think of that of the Burmans. It consists of a strip of red cloth several yards long. This is wrapped tightly around the hips and tucked in at the waist. In addition to this every woman has a hupil for Sundays and feast days. The hupil is a lace decoration of enormous size, which is worn as a sort of headdress. It incloses the face or it may extend around the neck or hang down from the head at the back like the war plumes of a Comanche chief. On dress occasions the girls wear also full skirts, which are often heavily embroidered with lace.

These women do much of the work. They are thrifty and accumulative. They are fond of gold jewelry and like especially ornaments made of American twenty-dollar gold pieces. Girls may be frequently seen thus wearing a small fortune in gold double eagles, although their feet may be bare.

The Ruins of Mitla.

The most famous ruins of this tribe lie within twenty-five miles to the southeast of Oaxaca City. They are about three hundred miles south of the Mexican capital and one can go there by train in less than a day. There are fairly good hotels at Oaxaca, and from there one can reach the ruins by carriage in five or six hours. Or he can go by train to San Pablo in an hour and a half and stop at the hotel there. In the latter case he will be right at the ruins and can easily spend a day or so in moving about through them.

The ruins are those of the ancient city of Mitla. They are of great extent, and the Indians say that under them lie the chambers wherein are stored the treasures of the ancient Zapoteca kings. Some of the ruins are striking. The Hall of the Monoliths, for instance, has walls five feet thick and columns of enormous size. The lintels over the entrances are solid blocks of stone eighteen feet long, four feet high and five feet thick, and the pillars are porphyry, rising fourteen feet from the floor and extending, it is said, six feet below it. They are as big around as a whiskey barrel.

Next this is the Salon of the Monoliths, which is 100 feet long and 20 feet wide. Its walls are 10 feet in height, and it has a floor of cement. The decorations of Mitla make you think of Pompeii. Some of the floors are in mosaics, and many of the structures are wonderfully carved reminding one of the crumbling temples and fort at Delhi in India.

Strange Indians of Northern Mexico.

Some of the most interesting of the Mexican tribes live in the northern part of the country. Chihuahua has, for instance, the Casas Grandes, which lie near the railroad on the way from Juarez to Terrazas. These Casas correspond somewhat to the homes of our cave dwellers, save that they were built on the level and were of vast extent. They were, in short, the first apartment houses on record. The chief building is 800 feet long from north to south, and 200 feet wide from west to east, covering an area of almost five acres. It seems to have consisted of three separate piles, united to lower buildings. The apartments varied in size, and the walls in places were forty or fifty feet high, indicating that the building had six or seven stories. These buildings were in ruins at the time of the Spanish conquest, and very little is known of the people who built them, although some suppose them to date back to the Moquis.

Some Cave Dwellers of Mexico.

In Chihuahua we have the Tarahumares Indians, some of whom still live in caves, and who are sometimes known as the American cave dwellers. Similar homes are to be found in the Sierra Madre mountains, the entrances being protected against the weather and wild beasts by stone or mud walls. Some of the caves are very large, and are reached by ladders, or by stairways cut out inside the house. Others of the houses are of stone, and some are of adobe, with roofs of thatch.

The Tarahumares, both women and men, are noted for their long, flowing, jet-black hair. The men pull out all the hairs from their faces. They say that whiskers are a sign of wickedness, and they believe that the devil

has always a beard. These people are said to be the greatest runners on record, and instances are known of where men have run 170 miles without stopping. They go on a slow trot, and keep it up for hours. The women can run as fast and as well as the men, and both men and women have moonlight races and other athletic sports. They sometimes race by torchlight.

The Pima Indians, who are found in the same locality, are much like the Tarahumares and the Tepehuanes. Another tribe nearby let their finger and toe nails grow, in Chinese fashion. They say that cutting off the nails will produce blindness, and that if a girl sucks the backbone of a deer her back will grow curved and she will have the backache. These tribes are noted for their chastity, those who fall from grace being publicly switched.

The Huicholes of Tepic.

Among the least known Indians of Mexico are some in the territory of Tepic, which lies on the west coast, surrounded by Jalisco, Durango and Sinaloa. Here live the Huicholes, whom the Mexicans call the barbarians. They have little to do with the present troubles, and do not want anything but to be let alone. They have their homes in the fastnesses of the mountains and are so warlike that it was a hundred years before the Spaniards were able to conquer them. They are nominally converted to Christianity, but they are practically barbarians and are said to be Christians only when favors are to be obtained. Many of them are hunters, and they snare deer in nets stretched between poles.

Some of the Huicholes look much like the Chinese, and this reminds me that I have seen many Japanese and Chinese faces among the Mexican Indians. It may be that a part of the ancient population drifted over from Asia across Bering strait, and came down here through our country. The Huicholes have a wicker chair which is just like the Chinese cane chair now in use, and they employ it in their religious ceremonies. It may be that the custom of wearing long nails which I have mentioned came also from China.

The Huicholes are about five and one-half feet high, and their women are very good looking. They wear short skirts and tunics of cotton cloth which they weave upon their own looms. The legs are left bare and the skirts is caught in at the waist by a girdle. The girdle, like the obi of Japan, is more costly than any other part of the dress. The women wear necklaces, and they have beads in their ears.

The Huichole houses each contain but one room and the entrance is low and small like that of the Eskimo igloo. The houses are circular and they are made of stone with thatched roofs. The idols are kept in caves in the hills.

These people make beautiful blankets and they do fine embroidery. They have many queer customs. Marriages are made by the parents. The babies do not creep, but they crawl about on all fours like a monkey until they are able to stand.

Not far from the Huicholes live the Coras, of whom only about 2,500 remain. These Indians claim to have come from the east and they look not unlike Koreans. They have features much like the Anglo-Saxons and they consider themselves better than the other tribes about.

The Coras marry at fifteen and the women keep their beauty a long time, although their lives are very insubstantial. Their houses have no ventilation and they bury their dead in caves.

Among the Tarascans.

Frederick Starr estimates that there are still a quarter of a million of pure Tarascan Indians in Mexico. Many of these people are found about Lake Patzcuaro, in the state of Michoacan, where was once situated Tzuntzoon, a great Tarascan city. The name sounds like Chinese. This town was visited by the Spaniards in 1522, and they wrote of its civilization and arts. They told of the wonderful feather work, for which the people are noted today; of their mother-of-pearl and bone carvings, and of their skill in enameling.

Here we again see a similarity between the Mexican Indian and the Chinese. In southern China is produced a kind of bird wing enamel in which the wings of the bluejay and humming bird are employed. The Tarascans do much the same work, getting their materials from the humming birds of Mexico, of which there are fifty different kinds, having feathers of every shape and color, running from sea green to emerald and from straw color to a fiery red.

The Tarascans have a tradition which corresponds to our deluge. Their Noah was called Tespi, and when the floods came he made a great boat and filled it with animals and birds. As the waters subsided he sent forth a vulture, but it remained away, feeding on the dead bodies which then covered the highlands. Finally a humming bird was sent forth, and it came back with a leaf in its mouth.

I am told that most of the Tarascans still worship idols, and that every farmer has one buried in each field, with the idea that it will keep the birds and other thieves away from the crops. Others of the Indians are Catholics, and they make long pil-

grimages to the various shrines. Many of them come to Guadalupe to worship. According to their old religion they prayed to the southern cross and looked upon the sun as their father. Today they object to doing business after sunset and are terrified at the time of an eclipse, which, they say, will give one the barelip.

The Tarascans believe in the evil eye, and they carry charms to ward off its effects. They do not like to be photographed, and would rather have strangers say evil things about their children than good things. The same is true of some of the people of Palestine.

Queer Customs of Love and Marriage.

I hear strange stories about the marriage customs of these Indians. They are said to believe in love charms, and think the dried little finger of a dead man will surely bring luck. It takes the place of the rabbit foot of the south. Near Lake Patzcuaro the chief place of courtship, is at the spring, and the lover watches for his sweetheart to go there to bring water. When he sees her he catches hold of her rebosa or shawl, and refuses to let go until she says yes. If she does so, he smashes the jar of water which she has on her head, so that it falls over her, and her girl friends thereupon give her a new jar with which she can carry the water home. The next day the man takes a load of wood to the door of his sweetheart's home, and if this is accepted the match is complete. She then comes to his house, and he gives her a bouquet of yellow bowers, which color is supposed to bring luck.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

O. HENRY ABOUT HIMSELF.

As a sub-heading for the first of a series of articles in the Bookman, under the title of "Little Pictures of O. Henry," Arthur W. Page uses a quotation from O. Henry's own words. Though O. Henry did not refer to himself, they apparently will ply. The paragraph is as follows:

"The heroes of the story will be a man born and 'raised' in a somewhat little Southern town. His education is about a common school, but he learns afterward from reading and life. I'm going to try to give him a style in narrative and speech—the best I've got in the shop."

Later on in his article Mr. Page quotes one of O. Henry's own letters, hitherto unpublished, as follows:

"I was born and raised in 'Noth Ca'lina' and at eighteen went to Texas and ran wild on the prairies. Wild yet, but not so wild. Can't get to loving New Yorkers. Live all alone in a great big two rooms on quiet old Irving Place three doors from Wash Irving's old home. Kind of lonesome. Was thinking lately (since the April moon commenced to shine) how I'd like to be down South, where I could happen over to Miss Ethel's or Miss Sallie's and sit on the porch—not on a chair—on the edge of the porch, and lay my straw hat on the steps and lay my head back against the honeysuckle on the post—and just talk. And Miss Ethel would go in directly (they say presently up here) and bring out to guitar. She would complain that the E string was broken but no one would believe her; and pretty soon all of us would be singing the 'Swanee River' and 'In the Evening by the Moonlight, and—oh, gol darn it, what's the use of wishing."

A NOTABLE REUNION.

Veterans in Blue and Gray to Rally Again at Little Round Top.

One of the most notable features of the coming Gettysburg semi-centennial will be the exercises by Governor K. Warren Post, No. 286, G. A. R., of Brooklyn, at the Warren statue on Little Round Top, commencing at 3 o'clock on the afternoon of July 2, the second day of the great battle that decided the fate of the Union. The event is of deep significance to New York, and especially to Brooklyn, where a second monument similar to the one on Little Round Top has been erected by Warren Post and his friends, and presented the former city, now a borough of the national metropolis, whose Civil War record is the pride of its citizenship.

A NEW HISTORY OF GETTYSBURG.

"The Battle of Gettysburg," by Jesse Bowman Young, is published this week by Harper & Brothers. This timely account of the great campaign and battle was written by one who served in it as a Union staff-officer and who, since the war, living in or near Gettysburg, has familiarized himself with all the ground covered by both armies. In the preparation for his work he has gathered from various sources much incidental matter not heretofore incorporated in any history, and has outlined the biography of every general officer who took part in the fight. The three parts of the book deal with (1) the campaign preceding the battle, (2) the battle itself, (3) statistics of the personnel of the Union and Confederate troops.

If England wants a poet laureate who can do justice to the militant suffragists, why doesn't it turn Kipling loose on the job?